

REVENUE SECRETARIAT.

The Block System of Irrigation under the Vani Vilasa Sagara

READ—

Government Order No. 1608-12-9875-9, dated the 5th December 1912, introducing the Block System of Irrigation under the Vani Vilasa Sagara in the Hiriyur Taluk for a period of six years from 1st July 1913, and fixing a water rate of Rs. 5 per acre

2. Government Order No. 13853-7—L. R. 42-18-22, dated the 18th June 1920, extending for a further period of six years the Block System under Vani Vilasa Sagara.

3. Government Order No. R. 1525-9—L. R. 13-22-3, dated the 19 September 1922, appointing a Committee to consider the question of the continuance or the abolition of the Block System of Irrigation under the Vani Vilasa Sagara.

4. Letter No. C 399—Gl. 22-23, dated the 15th—16th January 1923, from the Revenue Commissioner in Mysore, forwarding for orders of Government a copy of the proceedings of the Committee.

5. Government Order No. R. 3297-9—L. R. 13-22-17, dated the 19th January 1924, directing the levy of a penal rate of Rs. 5 per acre on land unauthorisedly irrigated under the Vani Vilasa Sagara.

6. Correspondence ending with the Survey Superintendent's letter No. 157, dated the 1st April 1925.

ORDER NO. R. 7401-6—L. S. 46-24-2, DATED 13TH JUNE 1925.

The Block System of Irrigation was first introduced under the Vani Vilasa Sagara for a term of six years with effect from 1st July 1913, by the Government Order dated the 5th December 1912. The system was introduced to secure economy in the use of water and to avoid the injurious effects of continuous irrigation and over-saturation of the soil on the public health of the locality. The main features of the system were that irrigation should be confined to well-defined blocks of the best land available, that only one-third of the area in each block should be cultivated with sugar-cane or other perennial crops and wet crops in a year, the remaining two-thirds being cultivated with irrigated dry crops and that cultivation should not be permitted in the vicinity of inhabited villages. The practice under this Reservoir at present is to grow paddy in summer when continuous supply of water is given. In the monsoon season, intermittent supply of water is provided for the irrigation of Thadi crops and also perennial crops like sugar-cane.

2. In the light of the experience gained, the details of the Block System have undergone several changes since it was first introduced. Several restrictions imposed under the system, which were found to cause hardship to the cultivators, were abolished but in spite of the concessions granted from time to time it has been found difficult to enforce the principal conditions of the system. The restriction of paddy cultivation to one-third of the area of the block is the most important feature of the system, but it has not been possible to enforce it, clandestine and unauthorised cultivation of paddy being very common. In the year 1921-22 when the total extent was about 10,000 acres, the area unauthorisedly cultivated with paddy was 2,678 acres.

3. With a view to examine the defects of the system and suggest remedial measures, Government in their order dated the 19th September 1922, appointed a Committee consisting of the Revenue Commissioner, the Chief Engineer, the Deputy Commissioner and the Executive Engineer, Chitaldrug. The Committee reported that the Block system in its present form had not altogether proved successful owing to its inherent weakness, which consisted in the impracticability of enforcing the rule that the supply of water for paddy cultivation should be limited to one-third of the area in each block. Survey numbers are not divided into three parts and properly demarcated. The temptation to make free use of the water when it was readily available has been found to be too great to resist in spite of the levy of penal water-rate. It was also found that despite extension of wet cultivation, the public health of the locality was not seriously affected. The Committee therefore recommended that the Block system in its present form, i. e., with restrictions placed on the crops that may be raised on particular portions of each Survey number might be abolished and that intermittent supply of water during the monsoon and continuous supply during summer might be made available for all lands under the channels, no restriction being placed on the nature of the crops that may be grown on the lands. In view of the removal of the restrictions, they recommended the enhancement of the water-rate from Rs. 5 to Rs. 8 per acre.

4. Government accept the recommendation of the Committee that the restriction regarding the cultivation of paddy only on one-third of the extent out of the blocks may be relaxed. The other arrangements and restrictions under the Block system, viz., the

prohibition of wet cultivation near inhabited villages and the concessions relating to the cultivation of cocoanut and honge, etc., will continue to be in force. The irrigation arrangements will also continue unaltered. The supply will be intermittent during the monsoon season and continuous during summer. The exact time-table will be made out from time to time for each season in advance and duly published in the villages concerned. The water-supply afforded by the Vani Vilasa Sagara is, as compared with that under similar works in the State, of a superior order in as much as water for paddy cultivation is given in summer and intermittent supply is given during the monsoon for sugar-cane and irrigated dry crops. In these circumstances they consider that the water-rate of Rs. 8 per acre recommended by the Committee is fair and accordingly sanction it for a period of five years with effect from 1st July 1925.

5. In view of the removal of restrictions on wet cultivation it is necessary to limit the area to which water can be given. The occupied area in the Blocks is reported to be 10,180 acres. Government direct that, for the present, this extent should be treated as the atchkat of the reservoir and that it should not be added to until further orders.

6. The Chief Engineer is requested to take steps to reduce the charges on account of the maintenance of channels under the Vani Vilasa Sagara.

7. The Deputy Commissioner is requested to publish the necessary notification announcing the increase of water-rate in the villages concerned immediately.

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